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This new scientific work which has brought us face to face with the ancient life has given a very different idea of the Greek religion; it has disclosed almost a new chapter in its history; it has thrown a new light upon its meaning and scope. The old views of Greek religion as made up of the worship of moral uncleanness and the love of sensuous beauty have been done away with. A juster estimate of the high regard for goodness entertained by the Greek worshippers has succeeded to such inadequate views. The great popular worship of Demeter and Dionysus, the high and lofty mysteries of Eleusis,—almost unrecognized in our consideration of this old paganism hitherto—immeasurably exalt our conceptions of their religious character. Such truthful conceptions will not harm us as believers in Christianity but only aid us in recognizing both God's presence among and love to those outside the Chosen People and also the real superiority of His special and unique work in Israel and Christianity.

The student will, as we have noted, find the latest and best materials for such a study in Mr. Dyer's volume. It consists of lectures delivered at the Lowell Institute, enriched by notes, plans and appendices. It may be commended to all who wish to gain this new conception of the beauty of old Greek religious life. The book is beautifully printed and well indexed.

Gerhart's Theology.

Institutes of the Christian Religion. Vol. I. Introduction and Theology Proper. By Emanuel V. Gerhart, LL. D. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son. Pp. xxvii., 754. Price, \$3.00.

The pages of the *STUDENT* do not admit of a detailed, or indeed any, examination of a system of theology so-called except so far as it exhibits the use of the Bible in its construction. Attention is called, therefore, to the biblical point of view of Dr. Gerhart's new volume which claims to be the first in this country to occupy its peculiar standpoint. The author says in his preface: "The evangelical Christianity of the nineteenth century is distinguished by the extraordinary force with which the Holy Spirit has been fastening the eyes of the Church and the world upon Jesus Christ." "Theologians on the continent of Europe have taken the lead in producing systems of theology constructed from His divine-human Personality as the fundamental principle." "But thus far no system of theology, developed from the Christ-idea as its standpoint, of American or English authorship, has greeted the Church." "Whilst it does not undervalue the decided progress in several branches of theology achieved by the heroes of the Reformation, this work is in sympathy with the Christological trend of the Christian sentiment and scholarship of our age. It is an earnest effort to make answer to the call for a doctrinal system in which Jesus Christ stands as the central truth; not only as the instrument of redemption and salvation, but also as the beginning and end of revelation." An introduction, written by Dr. Schaff, declares that "A theology constructed on the metaphysical doctrine of premundane decrees, or on the absolute sovereignty of God, is out of date. It did good service in the seventeenth century, but does not satisfy the wants of the nineteenth. Every age must produce its own theology." And in the body of work we read as follows concerning the Bible: "Hebrew Monotheism, the Mosaic economy, the schools of the prophets and the Davidian dynasty are so many different stages in a divine-human history whose characteristics all developed from the indestructible vitality latent in the Messianic idea. This idea is the key to a right

understanding of all the events recorded in the books of the Old Testament." "The questions of biblical criticism pertain chiefly to the authorship, structure, editorship and date of the Old Testament *books*. Can the traditional theory be sustained by the evidence of facts? . . . If the traditional theory falls, it is not truth, not objective reality that succumbs; it is a human theory only." "The unique spiritual dignity of the volume, the unaccountable contrast between Hebrew literature and the sacred literature of all other nations, . . . these things are the same whether the entire Pentateuch came from the hand of Moses, or many parts of it were indited by some unknown inspired authors." These extracts give the reader an idea of the breadth and evangelical spirit of this excellent book.

The Psalms.

The Psalms. A new Translation with Introductory Essay and Notes. By John DeWitt, D. D. New York: A. D. F. Randolph and Co. Pp. xxxvi., 325. Price, \$2.00.

This substantial, handsome octavo volume is the result of many years' study, embracing the published materials and revisions of two preceding volumes. It is an attempt to put the poetry of the Hebrew Psalter into rhythmical English lines so far as this can be done without sacrificing strict accuracy in the rendering of the original. The endeavor is very successful in attaining elegance with correctness, and will be found a desirable help in imparting freshness and light to a reading of the Psalter. The introductory essay and the notes are not particularly satisfactory largely because of the limits which the author imposed upon himself. Some excellent observations are given in the former and a good degree of Hebrew scholarship—not the highest—is shown in the latter. The author is beguiled by none of the vagaries of modern criticism except that in the case of a few psalms he admits the unreliability of the titles and grants that the 74th may be Maccabæan. The positiveness with which the traditional views are stated—without qualification and without argument, in most cases—contrasts somewhat prominently with the quite grudging acquiescence—where acquiescence is necessary—in the results of criticism. But this is perhaps the right and reasonable course in such a book, intended not so much for scholars as for intelligent people in general. A volume like this cannot fail to be helpful in disseminating sound knowledge about the Book of Psalms and in arousing new interest in it as poetry. The want of any indices should be corrected in subsequent editions.

Ancient Oriental Religions.

Fire from Strange Altars. By Rev. J. N. Fradenburgh, Ph. D., D. D. Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe. Pp. 324, price 90 cents.

Any endeavor to present a popular and intelligible account of the ancient religions of the East is praiseworthy. Dr. Fradenburgh is a skillful compiler and popular writer and this latest book from his hand is useful and admirable. It is divided into three parts: 1) Religion in the land between the Rivers (Assyria and Babylonia), 2) The gods of the Phœnicians, 3) The faith of the Pharaohs (Egypt). Much material from the original sources is found in the book, which could not elsewhere be obtained without much trouble and expense. It will be of real service.